
Appeal Decision

Site visit made on 15 January 2020

by Neil Smith BA Hons BTP MRTPI

an Inspector appointed by the Secretary of State

Decision date: 29 January 2020

Appeal Ref: APP/A5270/D/19/3241045

37 Highfield Road, Acton W3 0AJ

- The appeal is made under section 78 of the Town and Country Planning Act 1990 against a refusal to grant planning permission.
 - The appeal is made by Mr & Mrs Pearson against the decision of the Council of the London Borough of Ealing.
 - The application Ref 192695HH, dated 18 June 2019, was refused by notice dated 22 August 2019.
 - The development proposed is a rear extension and hip-to-gable loft conversion.
-

Decision

1. The appeal is dismissed.

Main Issue

2. The main issue is the effect of the appeal proposal on the character and appearance of the area.

Reasons

3. The appeal property is a single storey, semi-detached dwelling. The dwelling has a single-storey rear extension, a large rear garden and there is a tall brick-built wall which forms the boundary with No 39. The adjoining dwelling, 39, is similar in design with a hipped roof, however it does not have a rear extension. Whilst there are several other dwellings on this side of the street which have been extended in varying degrees; including single-storey rear extensions, dormer windows and roof extensions; this pair of dwellings retain much of their original character and symmetry.
4. The appeal proposal comprises four elements; a single storey rear extension; a hip to gable roof extension; a rear dormer window; and front roof lights. The Council has not raised an objection in relation to the front roof lights and I have no evidence before me to reach a different conclusion.
5. The single-storey rear extension would be built alongside the boundary with 39 and would extend further into the garden area than the existing rear extension. The main roof extension would be set in from the adjoining property to form a gable end. The rear dormer window would be at the same height of the ridge line of the main roof, be set in from the side elevations and extend beyond the main rear wall of the house. The appeal extensions would substantially increase the living accommodation and would be visible from both the street and the garden areas of the neighbouring properties.

6. Taken as a whole, the appeal proposal would be unacceptably disproportionate to the scale of the existing dwelling and have an unbalancing effect on it, due to its excessive size and bulk. The introduction of a gable end, adjacent to the hipped roof of the neighbouring property, would be out of character and would have a harmful impact on the street scene by virtue of the increase in its scale and form.
7. The appellant has provided details of other schemes including ones at 23 and 25 Highfield Road, one at 13 Lowfield Road, as well as an appeal decision at 38 Lowfield Road. I saw from my site visit that some of these schemes differ to the appeal site in that they are adjacent to dwellings which have gable ends. They also differ in that none of the developments have rear dormers which project beyond the main rear wall of the existing dwelling to the same extent. I am also aware that some of these schemes do not follow the design approach specified in the London Borough of Ealing, Supplementary Planning Document 4, Residential Extensions (SPD4) and they do not provide a basis for justifying similar proposals, which would equally fail to adopt good design principles. In any event, I have determined this appeal in relation to its own planning merits.
8. The appellant has also drawn my attention to a number of other schemes further along Highfield Road, on Lowfield Road, Walton Way and Westfield Road. I do not have the full planning histories on these schemes, and I cannot be certain of any direct comparison with the appeal scheme.
9. The appellant also argues that the extension has been designed on the basis of pre-application advice received verbally from Officers on 13 March 2019. However, I do not have a copy of any agreed minutes of the meeting and therefore I cannot be certain of the advice. I am also mindful that no representations have been made, however the lack of third-party objections does not comprise a benefit in favour of the proposed development.
10. I have had regard to the Council's SPD4 which states that the roofscape is an important element of the character of an area. It also states that a hipped roof into a gable-end roof is likely to unbalance the symmetry of semi-detached dwellings and adversely affect the character of the area as a whole. The SPD4 also states that rear extensions should be subordinate to the original dwelling. In most cases, a single-storey extension with a maximum depth of 3 metres and a maximum height of 3 metres will be acceptable, as long as the dwelling has not been extended in the past and is aligned with the neighbouring dwelling.
11. The appeal proposal would be an incongruous and inharmonious addition that would be harmful to the character and appearance of the surrounding area. The proposal conflicts with Policies 7.4 and 7B of the London Borough of Ealing Development Management Development Plan Document (2013) and SPD4, which require, amongst other things, development to complement their street sequence, building pattern and scale.

Conclusion

12. For the reasons above the appeal is dismissed.

Neil Smith

INSPECTOR